

**January 6th, 2021**

Happy New Year everyone! I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season, and I wish the best for everyone moving forward. Normally, the transition into the new year is often invigorating! You want to start doing all your resolutions because this is a fresh start, blank slate, and launching point for the whole rest of the year! And you want to know what?!

I felt none of that.

I enjoyed New Year's weekend with some friends and family, and essentially took the weekend off from doing just about anything work or chore related. I managed to do my routine December 31st and January 1st, but when the 2nd rolled around, I was exhausted. I will admit, I was up late most nights, even leading up to the holiday, and I indulged in some fine spirits and not-so-healthy foods. I told myself, "Alright just give yourself the weekend, but 'Come Monday, everything will be alright'" (Hehehe, Jimmy Buffett!... "Come Monday"... like, one of his most successful commercial hits besides Margaritaville? No, no one? Okay :(... ) I told myself that January 4th was going to be my day to get back into everything! And you know how well that turned out?

It didn't. I hardly even turned in my bed.

Okay, that is not entirely true, but I was completely unmotivated. I slept extremely late, I still did not do my routine, and I barely pulled myself together for the day. A couple productive things that I did was work on a commissioned project while also helping my mom out at her parents' house. So, sure, some things got accomplished, and actually, typing this out now, I realize that I accomplished more on that day than I thought... go me! It was also my mom's birthday, so I handled her birthday dinner and got the desserts, so that made for a fun evening!

Okay, so not the day that I planned, but looking back at it, despite how unmotivated I was to start the day, I still managed to do a number of other things. They may not have all been on my to-do list per say, but it was all necessary, and it certainly benefited those who needed it. What I am trying to say is, don't beat yourself up when plan's change. Give yourself credit for the things you did achieve. Perhaps some stuff still got pushed out, but what I did manage to do was worth my time.

The next day, I was lucky to spend a few hours with Harrison and an old friend of ours, Linsky. We went to mansions/state parks in our area, ate pizza, and walked some trails. It was really good to catch up with Linsky because it has been a while since we

had seen him in person. He had been stuck out in Illinois for school, and hadn't been able to return for a while in addition to Covid restrictions.

Honestly, after those couple of hours together, I felt invigorated! I went back home and plowed through work that I needed to do. And though I did not do my regular routine, I still give myself credit for all the trails we went on.

Which finally brings us to today. I did my regular routine, and it felt great. I could tell just from not sticking with it for a few days, I was getting stiff and tight. I was ignoring the signals from my body to take care of it. The worst part of all, I easily succumbed to my lack of motivation and laziness. Going back to Monday, I messaged Harrison telling him how much I was dragging. Harrison, too, was having his struggles early Monday morning, as well. He said to me, "I think you and I both rely too much on 'in-the-moment' motivation, which wears off quickly. This is why it's good that 'That First Step' also builds up our self-discipline." And he is right. I operate best in two ways.

- 1) Sudden and random bursts of energy and motivation, and then desperately try to keep myself as active as possible to ride up this energy train
- 2) Or while I'm under a lot of pressure, such as a deadline, an overbearing power, guilt, etc

This is why I need "That First Step." I preach consistency all the time; however, I lack it. As much as I try to regulate myself, my time, and my priorities, I am often left with little consistency and an inability to see some things through. Hence why my workout and meditation attempts in the past have suffered. We play these head games with ourselves constantly, and very often, we want our lazy side to win. It is so much easier to do nothing. By doing nothing; though, you accomplish nothing, and I hate that reality even more. Hence why besides I am focusing on my physical wellness, I am also focusing on my mental wellness and mindfulness.

## **Taking Steps to Find My Zen**

Everyone can find meditation in a number of ways. I think one misconception about meditating is that you have to totally silence your mind. From what I've found, it's more about making a quiet time to be mindful and aware of what's in your mind. And there are days where it is hard to keep it all together, but it's about giving yourself the time and space to essentially have that conversation with yourself. I've found, for me, it's not about pushing things out, but bringing it all in for a greater understanding. And through that, find what you need and what you don't. Again, this is what I personally do

and I'm not saying it's 100% proven to be effective, but I like when I power off everything, and I'll stretch and focus on my breathing. That way, I'm using physical methods to bring my body and mind down rather than trying to just sit there and force it. Also, I find stretching is one of the most overlooked parts of exercise and physical activity, and just a few minutes a day can really help target pain, stiffness, and overall energy levels. Being mindful can be a difficult and conscious effort, but the rewards are worth it.

I mentioned in a prior installment that I found a list of stretches from Facebook, through a post that was shared. Well, I saved all those photos from said list, and I want to share them all with you now. I got all of these from a post from Holistic Ali months and months ago. I had a difficult time finding the original post that contained all of these tutorials; however, I did find them individually searching through the page's photos. Feel free to check out the page on your own, and take a look at a number of the stretches I try to do daily.

<https://www.facebook.com/holisticali>

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
UPWARD DOG HAS MANY BENEFITS

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IT CAN STRENGTHEN THE WRISTS, ARMS, AND BACK AND TONING THE BUTTOCKS. ITS CHEST-OPENING ACTION PROVIDES A GREAT ANTIDOTE TO "OFFICE SLUMP," WHILE FREEDING THE LUNGS AND OPENING THE HEART.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
DOING THIS POSE FOR A FEW MINUTES PER DAY...

Part :- 2



THE CAT-COW STRETCH IMPROVES POSTURE AND BALANCE, STRENGTHENS AND STRETCHES THE SPINE AND NECK, STRETCHES THE HIPS, ABDOMEN AND BACK, INCREASES COORDINATION.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
PLANKING FOR A FEW MINUTES PER DAY...

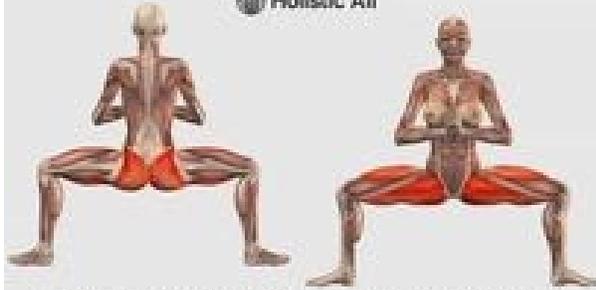


Planks help strengthen your core, arms, legs, tones your buttocks, builds abs & improves your mental focus

## DID YOU KNOW?

UTKATA KONASANA HAS MANY HEALTH BENEFITS

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IT STRETCHES YOUR HIPS, GROIN AND CHEST, TONES AND STRENGTHENS THE CORE MUSCLES, STRENGTHENS THE QUADRICEPS AND INNER THIGH MUSCLES, RESTORES THE SHOULDERS, ARMS AND UPPER BACK

## DID YOU KNOW?

Putting your legs up the wall for a few minutes per day...



This is a powerful and restorative pose that helps with Sending blood flow to your core, Eases stress, Helps you sleep, Calms your nerves, Relieves swollen ankles, Relieves varicose veins, Relieves headaches, and Improves digestion

## DID YOU KNOW?

DOING THE BRIDGE POSE REGULARLY....

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STRETCHES THE CHEST, NECK, SPINE, AND HIPS, STRENGTHENS THE BACK, BUTTOCKS, AND HAMSTRINGS, IMPROVES CIRCULATION OF BLOOD, HELPS ALLEVIATE STRESS AND MILD DEPRESSION.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Malasana Pose Has Many Benefits

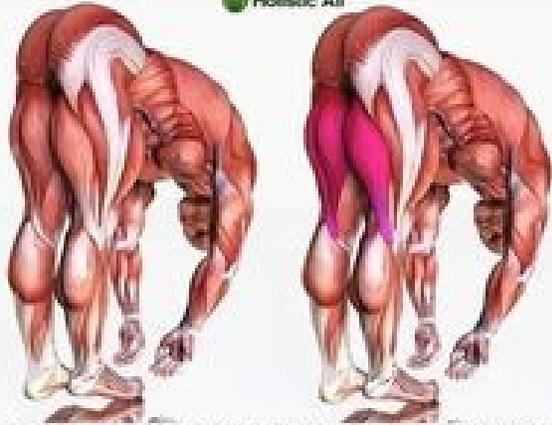


The malasana pose stretches the thighs, groin, hips, ankles, and torso. It tones the abdominal muscles and improves the function of the colon to help with elimination. This pose also increases circulation and blood flow in the pelvis, which can help regulate sexual energy.

SOURCE: YOGAOUTLET

## DID YOU KNOW?

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THE STANDING FORWARD BEND STRETCHES THE HIPS, HAMSTRINGS, AND CALVES. STRENGTHENS THE THIGHS AND KNEES. KEEPS YOUR SPINE STRONG AND FLEXIBLE?

## DID YOU KNOW?

WHEN YOU DO THIS POSE FOR A FEW MINUTES PER DAY..

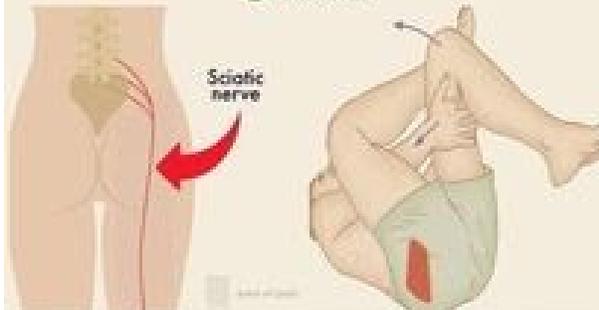


IT STRENGTHENS AND STRETCHES THE INNER AND BACK LEGS AND THE SPINE, TONES THE ABDOMINAL ORGANS, CALMS THE BRAIN, RELIEVES MILD BACKACHE

## DID YOU KNOW?

DOING THIS STRETCH FOR SEVERAL MINUTES PER DAY...

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STRETCHING YOUR PIRIFORMIS MUSCLES CAN LITERALLY REDUCE ANY PAIN ESPECIALLY SCIATICA AND LOWER BACK PAIN, IT ALSO HELPS REDUCE TIGHTNESS IN THE BACK OF YOUR LEGS, BUTTOCKS, HAMSTRINGS, AND PERHAPS YOUR CALF MUSCLES

## DID YOU KNOW?

DOING THIS POSE FOR 5 MINUTES A DAY...

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IT'S SUPER CALMING FOR THE MIND, IT'S GREAT FOR YOUR DIGESTION, IT ELONGATES THE LOWER BACK, IT OPENS UP THE HIPS.

## DID YOU KNOW?

DOING THE PLOW STRETCH REGULARLY...



The Plow Stretch opens the neck, shoulders, and back. By compressing the abdomen, it massages and tones the digestive organs, which improves detoxification.

## DID YOU KNOW?

WHEN YOU DO THIS STRETCH DAILY...

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QUADRATUS LUMBORUM

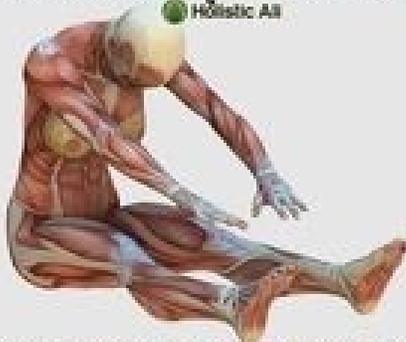


THIS IS THE AREA THAT CAUSES STIFFNESS AND LOWER BACK PAIN FROM LACK OF STRETCHING. THIS AREA MUST BE STRETCHED DAILY, ESPECIALLY IF YOU SIT ALL DAY.

## DID YOU KNOW?

DOING THIS POSE FOR A FEW MINUTES PER DAY...

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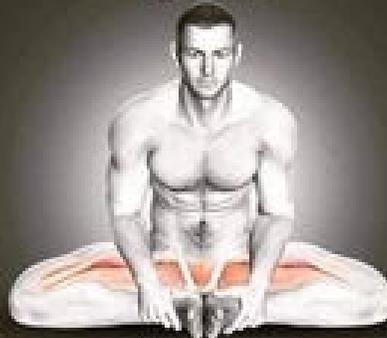
INDUCES RELAXATION, RELIEVES STRESS AND LIFTS MOOD, STRETCHES THE SPINE, SHOULDERS, LOWER BACK, AND HAMSTRINGS, STIMULATES ORGANS INCLUDING INTESTINES, KIDNEYS, LIVER, OVARIES AND UTERUS, HELPS RELIEVE SYMPTOMS OF MENSTRUAL DISCOMFORT.

Source: Dr. Weil

## DID YOU KNOW?

DOING THIS GROIN STRETCH FOR A FEW MINUTES PER DAY...

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THE BUTTERFLY STRETCH HELPS TO OPEN UP THE HIPS AND THIGNS AND IMPROVES FLEXIBILITY. THIS STRETCH TARGETS THE GROIN AREA, LOOSENING AND LENGTHENING THE INNER THIGH MUSCLES (ADDUCTORS). THE ADDUCTORS ARE OFTEN NEGLECTED IN WORKOUTS BUT THEY PLAY A KEY ROLE IN YOUR STABILITY AND BALANCE.